



*"I went from being destitute and living in emergency accommodation, to getting a qualification with Caritas and now succeeding on my university course."*

My name is Musaab and I am originally from Darfur, in western Sudan. In 2015 I made the difficult decision to escape Darfur, on my own, and travel to the UK. It was a dangerous place to live and I felt I had no future. I left behind my wife and parents five years ago and haven't seen them since. I didn't know anyone in Europe, let alone Manchester, but risked my life to live in a country, which I knew would welcome me.

After a long journey that took me across the Mediterranean and the channel crossing I eventually arrived in the UK months later.

I knew I needed to improve my English and began English classes in September 2016. This proved to be a great way for me to improve my spoken English and make friends. Caritas Refugee Education fosters such a great community atmosphere. As a stranger it's good for you mentally to be in an engaged community environment, where people are happy to chat to you. I met Andres, my English teacher, and enjoyed going to classes every day. Of the eight friends who were in lessons with me, we've all done so well, we're all working and one is now a qualified architect.

After being taught for a year I took functional skills English Level 2 and IELTS which I needed to get into university. It had always been my dream to study accountancy, as I love working with numbers and analysing them. Caritas Refugee Education helped me apply for uni and I'm now heading into the third year of my Accountancy & Finance degree at MMU.

I wanted to give something back to Caritas after all the help I'd received from then and I now help run the English classes. I'm responsible for organising the lessons, finding volunteers and students, and providing internet access and funding information for students to join lessons online. I also help out with supporting students to apply to college, sign-up at the doctor's and accessing finance.

Through Caritas I've learnt English, and now to some extent I teach it. That sense of community and the dedication of all the staff is brilliant. You get the opportunity to talk with teachers and volunteers while eating together after classes. Your teachers become your friends and you can practise your English. I've also met some of my best friends at Caritas, people who are also from Sudan and speak the same language, which helps me feel less homesick.

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